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Gromyko warns against deploying NATO missiles; proposes new offer

From Wire Services

Bonn—Soviet Foreign Minister Andrei A. Gromyko said last night that West Germany will be caught in a sharpened nuclear confrontation if a new generation of American medium-range missiles is stationed in Western Europe.

On the second day of his visit to West Germany, Mr. Gromyko repeated the offer of Yuri V. Andropov, the new Soviet leader, for a reduction of Soviet medium-range weapons to the level of the existing independent nuclear forces of Britain and France.

But he brought a new element to the standing Soviet proposal by saying Moscow was prepared to negotiate a reduction of its shorter-range SS-21, SS-22 and SS-23 nuclear weapons systems targeted on Western Europe on the basis of "mutuality" with the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

According to disarmament experts, it was the first time that Moscow had publicly offered to consider negotiations about its short-range ballistic missile systems. The comparable American weapons stationed in Western Europe are the Pershing 1A and Lance missiles.

On his first visit to Western Europe

since the death of Leonid I. Brezhnev in November, Mr. Gromyko said in a toast at a dinner given in his honor, "In the nuclear age the Federal Republic of Germany and the Soviet Union are, figuratively speaking, in one boat."

Apparently alluding to the Reagan administration, the 73-year-old foreign minister said the danger of nuclear war could be overlooked only by "people who are not capable of seeing things as they are."

"If there are gamblers and con men who state that they are ready to plunge humanity into a nuclear catastrophe for the sake of their ambition," Mr. Gromyko said, "then the question is allowed: Why do they want to, and who gave them the right to pull all of the people who want to live down the abyss with them?"

His four-day visit, coming just as an election campaign gets under way in West Germany, is from a Soviet viewpoint an important opportunity to urge the West German public to reject the deployment of 572 cruise and Pershing 2 missiles.

"One would like to give expression to the hope that the federal government, the political parties, independent of their current role in governing the state, and the entire West German public would soberly

judge the present situation and do everything to avert the danger of a nuclear arms race in Europe," Mr. Gromyko said.

He said carrying out the NATO plan would mean "for the whole world an extended nuclear confrontation with all its consequences."

He added pointedly, "We cannot ignore the fact that the Federal Republic [West Germany] is the only state due for the deployment of Pershing 2 rockets that can reach strategic targets deep inside the Soviet Union in a few minutes."

The Kremlin sees the 108 Pershing missiles, which can hit Soviet targets in less than 10 minutes, as a possible first-strike weapon. The cruise missiles, by contrast, hug the contours of the Earth to evade radar and rank among the slowest of missiles.

West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher told West German television in an interview that the first of three days of talks with Mr. Gromyko had clarified aspects of Soviet arms policy.

He said Mr. Gromyko had explained details of new Communist Party General Secretary Andropov's December offer to cut Moscow's arsenal of 600 medium-range missiles to match British and French combined strength.

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Sen. Hart Used to Explore Proposal

Nitze's Role Limited in Arms Talks

By Walter Pincus
Washington Post Staff Writer

The recent Soviet offer to limit the number of its intermediate-range nuclear missiles in Europe had its roots in informal discussions last summer between American negotiator Paul H. Nitze and his Soviet counterpart, Yuri A. Kvitsinsky, at the Geneva arms control talks, according to informed sources.

After Moscow and Washington rejected a new negotiating framework put together by Nitze and Kvitsinsky to try to achieve a compromise limit on the number of Soviet and U.S. nuclear missiles based in Europe, Kvitsinsky in November informally discussed a new Soviet proposal since made public by Soviet leader Yuri V. Andropov.

But Nitze, who was sent back to Geneva in September with instructions sharply limiting his freedom to bargain informally with Kvitsinsky, had to use a visiting senator, Gary Hart (D-Colo.), to help explore some of the details of the new Soviet plan and was not given the authority to follow up.

Nitze has decided that he does not want to be placed in the same awkward position when the talks resume next week, the sources said, and intended to ask President Reagan at a meeting this week for greater flexibility in responding to the Soviets when he returns to Geneva. The White House said yesterday that Reagan may meet with Nitze later this week.

A State Department spokesman

said yesterday that Nitze "has always been authorized to explore any flexibility in the Soviet position." But the spokesman, when questioned, refused to say whether Nitze could indicate any flexibility in the American position.

The first official confirmation of the informal talks between Nitze and Kvitsinsky last summer was published in The Washington Post on Dec. 23, after Andropov made public the new Soviet proposal.

Eugene V. Rostow, then the Reagan administration's arms control director, said in an interview that the Geneva negotiators had discussed "a generally promising compromise initiative developed during last summer ... an initiative the United States

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2 U.S. Peace-Keepers Injured by Mine in Sinai

TEL AVIV, Jan. 17 (AP)—Two American soldiers were wounded, one seriously, by a mine explosion in the Sinai Peninsula today, the multinational peace-keeping force announced.

The Americans were believed to be the first casualties suffered by the 11-nation, 2,600-man force since it began policing the eastern Sinai last April after Israel returned the final portion of the desert peninsula to Egypt.

In Washington, the Army identified the two wounded men as 1st Lt. Richard N. Fincher, 25, of Waxhaw, N.C., who was listed in critical condition, and Pfc. Albert R. Brown, 18, of Springfield, Mass., in stable condition.

The multinational force's Tel Aviv office denied an Israel radio report that a third soldier was killed by the mine explosion. The radio report said a helicopter took the two wounded men to Yoseftal Hospital in Eilat.

The Pentagon said the wounded men were from the 1st Battalion, 502nd Infantry of the 101st Airborne Division, based at Fort Campbell, Ky.

The office of the multinational force gave no details of the explosion but said it was investigating. Israel radio said it occurred at the southern tip of Sinai, near the town of Ophira which Israel built during its occupation of the peninsula and ceded to Egypt when its forces withdrew nine months ago.

NITZE'S ROLE...Cont.

was willing to explore.... [It] was turned down flatly by the Soviet Union in September."

Last weekend the story was revived by some officials who cited this incident as a cause for last week's firing of Rostow as director of the Arms Control and Disarmament Agency. Those officials said Rostow had been aware of Nitze's informal negotiations and initially defended him when White House national security affairs adviser William P. Clark wanted to discipline him.

However, most government officials, including Reagan, have maintained that Rostow's firing stemmed from personal and managerial differences rather than the Nitze incident.

According to informed sources, Nitze and Kvitsinsky, two experienced negotiators, reached an extraordinary agreement between themselves last July on a new "package" approach to the negotiations on limiting nuclear missiles in Europe, which appeared to them to have bogged down after two rounds of discussion.

The package, these sources said, included the following elements.

- The Soviets would freeze the number of their intermediate-range SS20 nuclear missiles based in the Far East and reduce the number of SS20s in central and western Russia that are aimed at western European targets.

- The United States would not deploy the Pershing II, the missile the Soviets most feared because it could hit Soviet territory within eight minutes after launch from planned bases in West Germany. The United States also would limit the number of

ground-launched cruise missiles stationed in Europe, depending on the number of Soviet European-based SS20s.

No number was set, but the United States would be left with more warheads and fewer launchers because an SS20 carries three nuclear warheads while a cruise missile launcher will fire four separate nuclear missiles.

- There would be limitations on the number of nuclear-capable aircraft in Europe with the goal of equalizing numbers for both the NATO and Warsaw Pact countries, and particularly American and Soviet planes.

This package strayed considerably from the initial negotiating positions put forward by the two countries.

The original Soviet position called for a reduction in NATO and Warsaw Pact nuclear systems, both aircraft and ground and sub-launched missiles, to 300 by 1990. This would prevent the United States from deploying either the Pershing II or cruise missiles force it to reduce the number of its nuclear-capable aircraft.

The U.S. position was to negotiate only about missiles and to pursue a "zero option," under which the United States would not deploy any of the planned 108 Pershing or 164 cruise missiles if the Soviets agreed to destroy not only their roughly 300 older SS4 and SS5 missiles but also all of their 300 new, deployed SS20s.

The U.S. and Soviet negotiators, sources said, tried to narrow the wide gap between the two positions by establishing a logical framework for missiles and bombers without setting specific numbers.

For example, the Soviets wanted to include British and French nuclear

missile systems within the American totals, while the United States wanted to eliminate all SS20s in the Soviet arsenal, even those stationed in the Far East and targeted on China.

The Nitze-Kvitsinsky approach, one source said, was to freeze the number of SS20s in the Far East and appear to equate them to the British and French systems. That left the opportunity to reach some parity between U.S. and Soviet missile warheads in the European area.

In July, after Nitze's initiative became known in Washington, some Reagan administration officials argued that the arms control expert had exceeded his authority and should be reprimanded. He was not. But when Nitze, 76, returned to Geneva in September for the third round of negotiations, his instructions sharply limited his authority to engage in such exploratory discussions.

He felt so tied by his instructions that he used Hart one day as an intermediary with Kvitsinsky to explore hints of a new Soviet negotiating position. As the three lunched together, the two negotiators posed questions and offered answers to each other through Hart, who later said he "served as a hollow log".

Although he cabled the informal new Soviet positions to Washington, Nitze was not given any authority to follow them up, according to sources.

Much of the Soviet proposal since made public by Andropov appears to have roots in the Nitze-Kvitsinsky discussions last summer, including separate limits for missiles and aircraft, rough parity on numbers of missile warheads rather than launchers, and the destruction of some SS20s.